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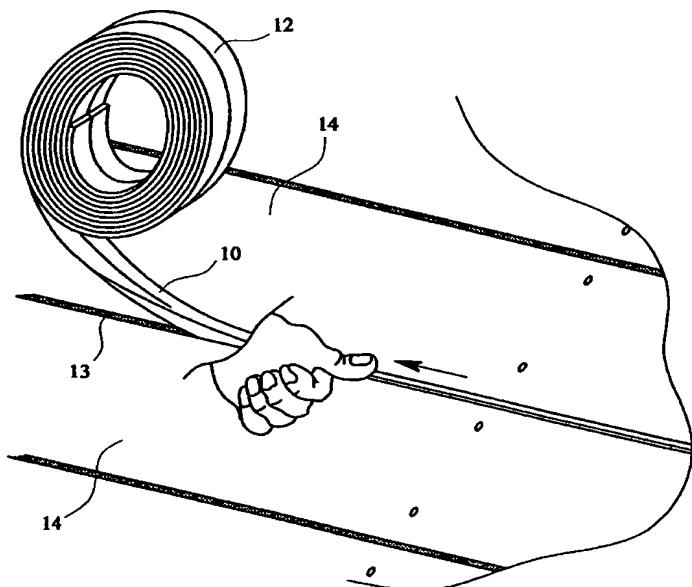
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For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(54) Title: SEALING GAPS BETWEEN FLOOR BOARDS ETC



(57) Abstract: A gap between adjacent floor boards (14) can be sealed using an elongate strip (10) of resiliently flexible material, which is compressed transverse its longitudinal axis and fully inserted into the gap (13) to be sealed by transposing the strip (10) transverse its longitudinal axis, and allowing the strip (10) to partially recover its shape, such that the opposite side edges of the strip (10) engage respective opposite side edges of the adjacent floor boards (14). The strip (10) thus provides an effective and inconspicuous seal between adjacent floor boards (14).

Sealing Gaps between Floor Boards etc

This invention relates to sealing gaps between floor boards and other panel members.

Traditionally, floors in houses have been constructed from elongate planks of wood laid end-to-end and side-by-side 5 to cover the floor area.

Many old houses have ground floors which are suspended over a ventilated cavity or cellar. A disadvantage of this is that cool draughts permeate through gaps, which over time appear between adjacent floor boards.

10 Laying carpet or another floor covering over the floor boards helps to alleviate the above-mentioned problem. However, it is presently fashionable to have bare wooden floors and this brings the associated disadvantage of cold draughts.

15 It is known to fill gaps between adjacent floor boards with paper or another sealant. However, this looks unsightly and is relatively easily dislodged during expansion and contraction of the gaps with changes in humidity and/or temperature.

20 I have now devised a method of sealing a gap between adjacent panel members which alleviates the above-mentioned problems.

25 In accordance with this invention there is provided a method of sealing a gap between adjacent panel members, the method comprising providing an elongate strip of resiliently flexible material, compressing the strip transverse its longitudinal axis to fold the strip about a line which extends longitudinally thereof intermediate its opposite side edges, inserting the folded strip fully into the gap to be sealed by transposing the strip transverse its longitudinal access, and 30 allowing the strip to partially recover its shape such that the opposite side edges of the strip engage respective opposite side edges of the adjacent panel members.

35 The compressed strip exerts a bias against the side edges of the adjacent panel members, thereby holding the strip firmly in-situ. The strip completely fills the gap between the adjacent panel members and thus prevents draughts from permeating through the gap. The strip also has the advantage

that it is able to fill gaps which vary in width along their length.

The strip is inexpensive to manufacture, for example by extruding a plastics material, and is straightforward to fit.

5 Preferably a strip is chosen having a colour which closely resembles the colour of the panel members. Alternatively, the strip may be transparent.

In one embodiment, the strip may be V-shaped in cross section, with opposite sides of the V being brought together 10 during insertion of the strip into the gap.

In an alternative embodiment, the strip may be flat with a pre-formed line of weakness extending along its length about which the strip can be folded. This arrangement has the advantage that the strip can be provided on a roll and cut to 15 the desired length by the user.

Also, in accordance with this invention there is provided a panel assembly comprising two side-by-side panel members having a gap therebetween and a sealing strip filling the gap, wherein the strip comprises an elongate piece of 20 resiliently flexible plastics material folded about a line which extends longitudinally thereof intermediate its opposite side edges and which has its opposite longitudinal side edges biased against the side edges of the respective adjacent panel members.

25 An embodiment of this invention will now be described by way of example only and with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a transverse sectional view through a sealing strip for use in sealing the gap between adjacent floor 30 boards in accordance with this invention;

Figure 2 is a perspective view demonstrating how a gap between adjacent floor boards is sealed in accordance with this invention; and

Figure 3 is a sectional view through adjacent floor 35 boards having a gap therebetween which has been sealed in accordance with the present invention.

Referring to Figure 1 of the drawings, there is shown

an elongate strip 10 of resiliently flexible transparent plastics material formed on each of its opposite sides with a longitudinally-extending groove 11 which extends intermediate opposite side edges of the strip.

5 Referring to Figure 2 of the drawings, the strip 10 is provided on a roll 12. In use, the strip can be used to seal a gap 13 between adjacent floor boards 14 by folding the strip at the free end of the roll 12 longitudinally of it self into a V-shaped formation. The folded end of the strip is then 10 inserted transverse itself into one end of the gap 13, with the folded portion being inserted foremost. The user then presses the folded strip fully into the gap, as shown, whereupon the strip attempts to recover its shape, thereby causing the opposite side edges of the strip to be biased against the side 15 edges of the respective adjacent floor boards 14.

Once the gap has been fully sealed, the user can cut the roll and use the remaining portion to seal further gaps.

Referring to Figure 3 of the drawings, the strip provides an effective and inconspicuous seal between adjacent 20 floor boards 14. It will be appreciated that the strip is extremely inexpensive to manufacture and is relatively straightforward to fit:

Claims

1. A method of sealing a gap between adjacent panel members, the method comprising providing an elongate strip of resiliently flexible material, compressing the strip transverse to its longitudinal axis to fold the strip about a line which extends longitudinally thereof intermediate its opposite side edges, inserting the folded strip fully into the gap to be sealed by transposing the strip transverse to its longitudinal access, and allowing the strip to partially recover its shape such that the opposite side edges of the strip engage respective opposite side edges of the adjacent panel members.
2. A method as claimed in claim 1, in which a strip is chosen having a colour which closely resembles the colour of the panel members.
- 15 3. A method as claimed in claim 1, in which a transparent strip is chosen.
4. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, in which a strip is chosen which is V-shaped in cross section, with opposite sides of the V being brought together during insertion 20 of the strip into the gap.
5. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, in which a strip is chosen which is flat with a pre-formed line of weakness extending along its length about which the strip can be folded.
- 25 6. A panel assembly comprising two side-by-side panel members having a gap therebetween and a sealing strip filling the gap, wherein the strip comprises an elongate piece of resiliently flexible plastics material folded about a line which extends longitudinally thereof intermediate its opposite side edges and which has its opposite longitudinal side edges biased against the side edges of the respective adjacent panel

members.

7. A panel assembly as claimed in claim 6, in which the strip has a colour which closely resembles the colour of the panel members.

5 8. A panel assembly as claimed in claim 6, in which the strip is transparent.

9. A panel assembly as claimed in any of claims 6 to 8, in which the strip is V-shaped in cross section in its as-moulded condition.

10 10. A panel assembly as claimed in any of claims 6 to 8, in which the strip is flat with a pre-formed line of weakness extending along its length about which the strip can be folded.

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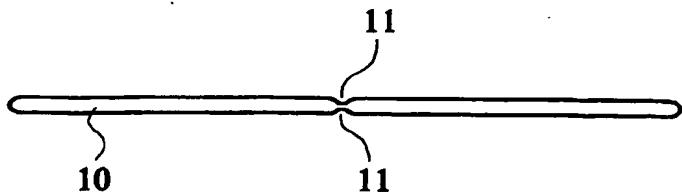


FIG. 1

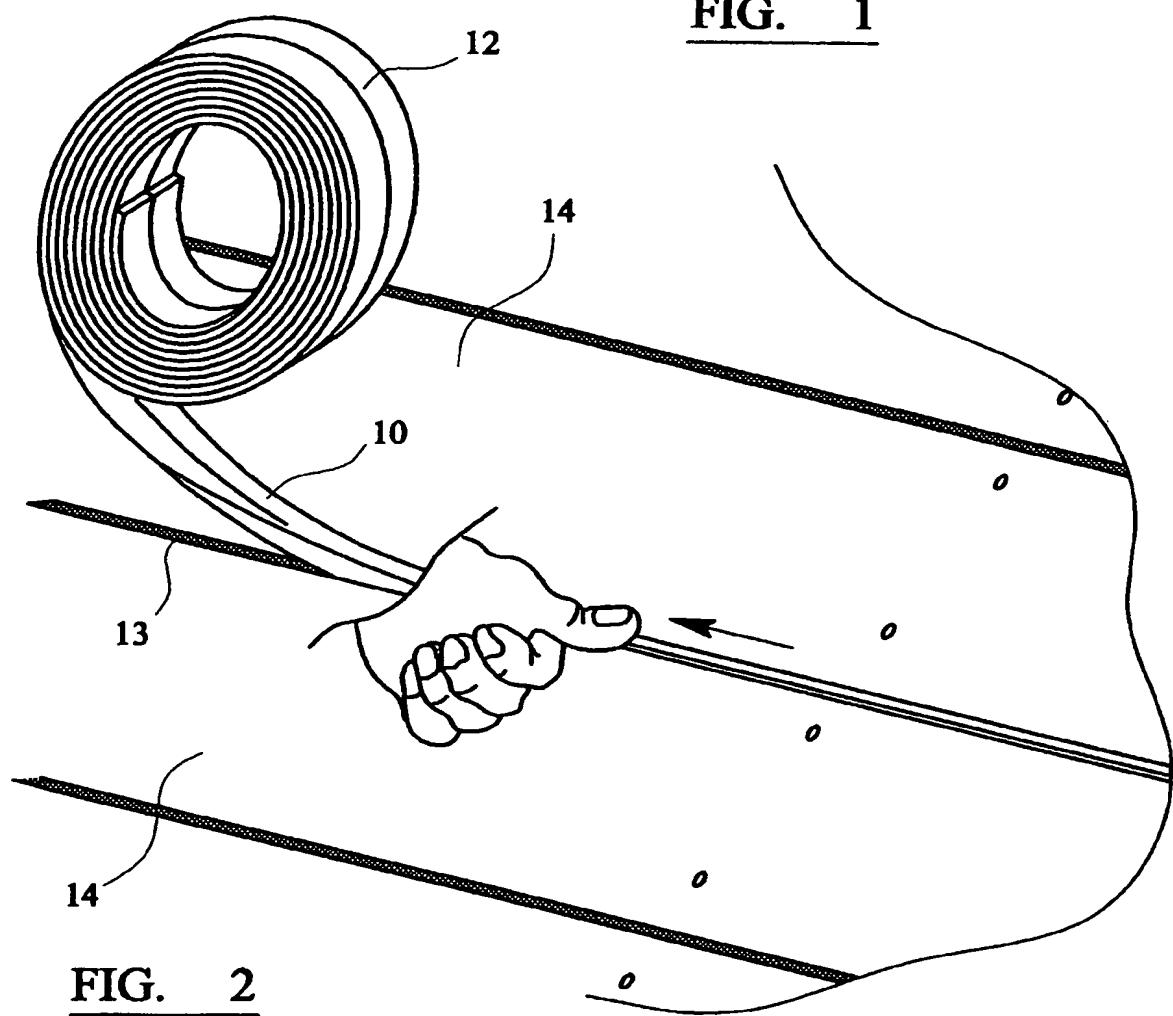


FIG. 2

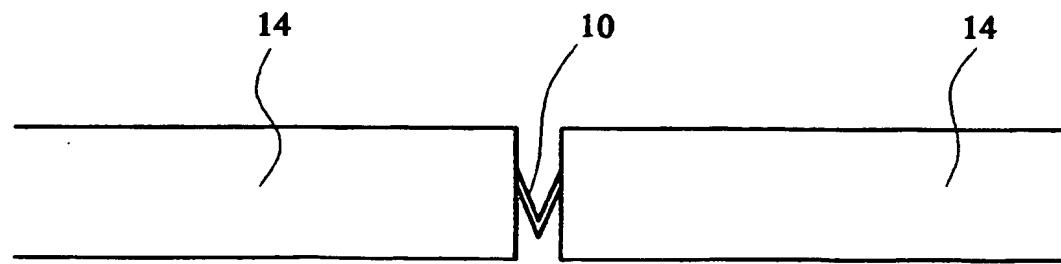


FIG. 3

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Int'l Application No
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IPC 7 E04F15/02 E04F19/02

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 E04F

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data, PAJ

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category °	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	WO 94 29546 A (ENGEN JAN) 22 December 1994 (1994-12-22) page 4, line 28 -page 9, line 32; figures 1,2,4,5	1,4,6,9
A	---	5,10
Y	US 6 336 300 B1 (BABUCKE FRED M) 8 January 2002 (2002-01-08) column 5, line 66 -column 9, line 30; figures 1-5	1,4,6,9
A	DE 200 11 049 U (KOEHLER WOLFGANG) 30 November 2000 (2000-11-30) page 7, line 28 -page 10, line 11; figure 3	1,4,6,9

 Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C. Patent family members are listed in annex.

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